

of him. To the Christian the field is in the unconverted world. Then let us lift up our eyes to see the field for Christian work and feel a partial responsibility for its occupancy for Christ.

## II. THE OPPORTUNITY

The query naturally arises is there an opportunity to do any work for Christ and the church?

Last summer about fifty places were reported to me as favorable mission points. Of these we have been able to occupy a very few.

I desire to refer to my own State to impress the fact that opportunity abundant abounds.

There are to my certain knowledge at least five county seats with population ranging from 6000 to 15000 in which we have from ten to forty members and no services or organization. And at least a dozen other places where a nucleus already exists.

If the same conditions prevail in the other conference districts, a hundred doors are swinging open for us to enter.

## III. THE NECESSITY

Mission work is the life of the church. Stable churches in the local districts the bulwark of all our institutions. Our strength as a church is measured by our usefulness for good. Our good should be in proportion to our number. Hence the need of planting more churches to enlarge our sphere of usefulness and power for good. Many of our present congregations are in the country or small towns. There is a constant exodus from these to centers of population and to new communities. Home mission work is essential to keep these in touch with the church as integral parts of the church. This can only be done by our planting self-supporting congregations in every locality where our people are drawn. The necessity is more clear to me than a way to fill the want.

## IV. THE NEEDS

The needs for home work are at least two, i. e., men—money. Men who are sound in the faith, men who believe in the Brethren church, who know Christ, who will sacrifice for him and the church, are the ones needed for home work.

This implies ability to preach Christ and his doctrines as held by us in such a way as to win men. No apologetic for the church or her doctrines will meet the demand. Look over the field and see how many men you can count who are ready to give themselves living sacrifices for the home work. Then lift up a prayer that God will thrust men in to the field. Thus our greatest need is men.

As to the money the amount needed will be in proportion to the work undertaken.

## V. LINES OF WORK

There are two lines of work which present themselves to mission workers. The first is the building up that which is already planted.

This includes the sustaining of the church unable to successfully carry on the work. Caring for the churches without pastoral supply and looking after the isolated members which abound in any conference district.

The second is to enter a new field with the idea of planting a church as a center and bringing the same to the point of self-support.

Work in this line means hold all the ground now occupied and press out as far as possible in new fields. To accomplish this any mission board will have all they can do and at the same time achieve glorious results.

## VI. MY OPINION

The salvation of mankind will not be accomplished by local mission boards. Their greatest good will be in holding the field already occupied, and strengthening the local churches, and in teaching missions.

It seems to me the future growth of our church depends on strong congregations as centers, out of which will flow a stream of people with intense love for the church. A demand for the preached word thus arises in a new locality. The local church develops the need of opening new work, and if unable to carry it on should refer her need to the mission board, which if able should lend all needed assistance. The sphere of the local mission board then is to obtain centralization of effort, unity of action, and to do the will of the churches which should be the will of Christ.

## PRAYER

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"Prayer moves the hand which moves the world." The doctrine of prayer is as vital to the Christian as life itself. The expression, a prayerless Christian, carries with it a contradiction. Prayer is an essential means of grace. Without it the Christian growth is greatly hindered. To be effective it must be according to the mind and will of God. Therefore our prayers must be based upon the revelation of his own will to us. Prayer and rightly studying God's word are inseparable. If you study God's word you will pray. A prayerless man is spiritually dead. Moody said that a man can as well live physically without breathing as spiritually without praying. Breathe, else die; likewise pray, else die.

Words without the concurrence of the heart wander wild as waves that wash no shore. The Father never hears words without thoughts. Pride may direct our thoughts. In general, pride is at the bottom of most mistakes. In the young life, it ruins character. A part surrender may hinder the prayer life. There may be a greater desire for gold than for godliness. Our own poet has said that this life is a wild aeolian harp of many joyous strains; but under all there runs a loud perpetual wail as of souls in pain. The ear may be deaf to that wail and the

burden of lost souls be unknown and unfelt, thus forming a barrier between the soul and its God.

Often we know not how to pray. Well may we look to the Father and say, "Teach us how to pray." Faith is the fulcrum, "In his name" the lever by which the Christian may lift the burdens of life and roll away the stones of difficulty and sin. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. The soul's sincere desire, by "heaven's carrier-pigeon, prayer, meets the loving hand of God, and the answer Love dictates. It may be an answer that bids the seeking one to wait, perhaps for long, long years. It may be answered while we are praying. It may come in a denial of the desired blessing, because we ask amiss. Ask in faith, nothing wavering, and God answers the prayer. Righteousness and sin have no affinity for each other. The smallest sin may be a rock of hindrance. "The prayer of the righteous man availeth much." Prayer and answer of prayer are simply the preferring of a request on the one side and compliance with that request on the other. Man applies, God complies. This is true only when there is perfect correspondence between man and God.

Man's extremity is God's opportunity. What we can do, God will not do. Do you ask for opportunities of service? Did you speak a kind word to your mother this morning when you were so prompted? Do you pray for a deepening of your spiritual life? Did you study your Bible this morning and do you commune often with God? Do you long for power in prayer? Is your life pure and Christ like? Or do you sometimes worry, which is distrusting God and doubting his promises, and do you ever let that temper lead you to say unkind words? Do you pray that you may be loved and may have many friends? Do you love others and are you living a life of love, developing a clean, noble character that will draw others to you? Perhaps we can answer some of our own prayers.

Every growing Christian has a regular time or times for prayer and Bible study each day. The early morning is the best time. "Let prayer be the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening." Prayer may enter heaven before sunrise. Nothing can better waft the soul into peaceful slumber than prayer. Neither time nor place should be a hindrance. Neither should much work crowd out prayer. Instead, more work, more prayer should be the rule; then the reverse will be true, more prayer, more work. When Augustine and Gladstone and many other men of prayer were most hard pressed with work, they took most time for prayer.

For what shall we pray? For blessings spiritual, for blessings temporal, for a good conscience, for health of mind and body, for friends and loved ones, and all who need our prayers. Pray for something definite. Pray for somebody.

Who can pray? He that is child like and humble and penitent and Christ-like. The